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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the reasons for and means of publishing research or making research available. The first section discusses why it is important to publish. The second section discusses what should be published, and the third section provides information on where to publish (books, journals, Educational Resources Information Center database, on-line publications, World Wide Web). The fourth section gives an overview of how to prepare a manuscript for publication. (NAV)

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Publishing Your Papers Using the Internet

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

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1. Why Do We Publish Papers?

A. The Importance of Publication in Academia

People who are in academia have to publish papers. They are responsible for doing research and publishing the results or progress of their research. Publishing is very important for getting promotions or better jobs.

For postgraduate students, both degrees and publications are important for getting jobs in academia. The degree to which publication is important varies in different countries, academic fields, institutions, etc. In general, publishing is more important in science than in the humanities, more important in more advanced countries than in developing countries, and more important in more prestigious institutions and the higher levels of education.

Twenty years ago, it was possible to get a full time position teaching English in a Japanese university if you had an MA in English, linguistics, English education, or a related field. However, today it is very difficult to obtain even a part time position with only an MA. Most institutions require publications.

B. Sharing Knowledge and Information

Publication is not only for the purpose of getting jobs or promotions. The main purpose of publishing is sharing knowledge. Researchers report what they have found, and other people can examine the results and the methods and even carry out similar studies to confirm the results. If the new studies get different results, the results of both studies can be re-examined to find out the reason for the differences. Errors may be found, or the influence of other variables may be better understood. In this way, knowledge is developed.

In order to do research or teaching, we need information. We get it through publications. We are also responsible for providing information to other researchers and teachers. This information is not limited to the results of studies. It can also include bibliographies, theoretical discussions, meta-analyses, discussions of methodological problems, etc., which might be useful for other researchers and teachers.

In the field of TEFL/TESL, it is important to share or discuss teaching methods. There are many publications which have teaching plans; ideas for instruction;

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teaching materials; using equipment, particularly computers, for teaching, as well as empirical and theoretical research.

In any field, there are many publications which are informative to people in that fields. They are conference reports, book reviews, sources of information, new publications, annotated bibliographies, etc.

2. What Should We Publish?

We should publish theoretical papers and the results of our research. These formal papers are generally the greatest contribution to the field. However, many publications also have sections for forums, research in progress, reviews, etc. Class assignments, projects, and other types of papers can be published in these sections or re-written as formal papers.

In addition, materials related to papers that we write, such as bibliographies, book reviews, useful information we find, etc. As long as they are informative and useful for readers, they are potentially publishable.

3. Where Can We Publish?

A. Books

It is best to publish a book. However, publishing a book is not easy, and it is sometimes costly, time consuming, and circulation may be limited. Many publishers are not interested in publishing anything which does not have a big market. Results of research and other types of academic books usually have a limited readership, and unless you are a well-known scholar, it is not easy to publish a book. In some cases, you may have to pay the cost or a part of the cost of publishing the book. It generally takes from six months to a year between the time you give the publisher the manuscript and the time the book comes out. Depending on what area you are doing research in, the research may be outdated by the time your book is published. Publishers generally sell their books in limited regions, and your book will be available mainly in that region. Thus your book will not be available to everyone in the world.

If you are interested in publishing books, you should check catalogues of publishers to find out of the type you are interested in publishing, books for a similar audience, etc. You can obtain catalogues through the Internet.

Also, many publishers have WWW pages and e-mail addresses, so you can get more information and contact them to discuss the possibility of publishing a book.

B. Journals

If your publication is a paper, article, or something relatively short, you can publish it in a journal. There are many journals related to language teaching and different fields of linguistics. They are always looking for good manuscripts. You can check the kinds of material they publish and their requirements for publications, and you can submit your manuscript to an appropriate journal. Most journals do not charge anything to consider manuscripts for publication. Even if they do not publish your paper, they usually pass along their readers' comments about your manuscript, and you can rewrite it and submit it to another journal.

Deciding which journal to submit your manuscript to is very important. Some journals are perceived as being very academic and others are not. Journals also vary in their preferences for theoretical papers or practical papers, for qualitative research or quantitative research. You need to know about the reputations of journals in your fields, so that you can choose an appropriate journal to submit your paper to. It is a waste of your time and effort to submit your theoretical paper to a journal that only publishes practical papers.

Once you have submitted your manuscript, it takes time for the editors of the journal to decide whether to publish your paper. If they reject it, you have lost much time. Even they publish your paper, it may take one year or even longer from the time you submitted your manuscript until it comes out. Another disadvantage is that most journals have limited circulation. Most journals have less than 10,000 copies printed, and some have less than one thousand copies printed and are circulated only in limited areas.

Many journal editors have e-mail addresses, and you can contact them, discuss the possibility of publishing your paper, ask questions about the format of the manuscript, etc. Also, many editors subscribe to the lists which are related to their journals. They may find what you are doing interesting, if you often post messages about what you are working on.

C. ERIC

ERIC is a massive database which accepts submissions of manuscripts. They accept research reports, monographs, manuscripts of speeches and presentations, studies, instructional materials, teaching guides, manuals and handbooks, bibliographies, and opinion papers. ERIC makes microfiche from manuscripts that they accept and sell them as either a hard (paper) copy or microfiche at a reasonable price to cover the cost. It has a large circulation and database, and many researchers use them.

If the paper is good and well written, and the copy is readable, they will generally accept it. (Since the manuscript is the final copy, you need to prepare

a good copy.) It takes about six months from the time the manuscript is accepted until you receive the microfiche.

You should send ERIC two copies of your manuscript. In order to save time, you can send the signed consent form with the manuscript. Otherwise, ERIC will make a decision about the paper and then ask you for a signed consent form, and time will be lost. (A copy of the consent form, along with the address where you should submit your contributions, can be found in the Appendix at the end of this article.)

An advantage of ERIC is that researchers and teachers all over the world can search the database either on line or using CD-ROMs. They can find all the papers ERIC has related to their field of interest and request copies of them. Therefore, your paper, article, etc., can be available to anyone who is interested in it, anywhere in the world.

D. On-Line Publications

There is a growing number of on-line journals. These are journals that are published on the World Wide Web. Information about some on-line publications is given below. Each publication has some requirements as to length, format, etc., just as ordinary journals do.

TESLEJ-L

North America:

URL: <http://www.well.com/www/sokolik/tesl-ej.html>

Asia:

URL: <http://www.kyoto-su.ac.jp/information/tesl-ej/>

Editor: Maggie Sokolik [msokolik@uclink.berkeley.edu]

The Internet TESL Journal

URL: <http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/>

Editor: Charles Kelly [iteslj@aitech.ac.jp]

English Teachers' Electronic Newsletter

http://snunit.huji.ac.il/snunit_e/newslett.htm

E. World Wide Web Pages

The easiest way to make your manuscript available is to put it on your WWW page and post an announcement on mailing lists related to your topic that it is available, along with the WWW address. You can do it quickly and easily, once you know how to do it. More and more universities and institutions allow faculty and students to post WWW pages. If you spend a few hours to learn how to make WWW pages, you can make a simple page for your publications.

This method is quick and economical. However, its disadvantage is that it is not considered to be a publication, so you cannot claim it as a publication for the purpose of promotion or job applications.

4. How to Prepare the Manuscript

When you prepare a manuscript for publication, you need to be sure to make a good manuscript.

First of all, the format of your paper has to follow the format required for the publication you are submitting it to. Many journals have their own style sheets, and you need to follow them. If the journal does not have special requirements, you should follow either APA or MLA style, which are the two most common styles of manuscripts. APA is more generally used in papers related to linguistics and language teaching. You can obtain the APA style sheet (<http://www.gasou.edu/psychweb/tipsheet/apacrib.htm>) and the MLA style sheet (<http://www.hcc.hawaii.edu/education/hcc/library/mla.html>) through WWW.

Second, you should not use italics, bold type, different type faces or sizes of fonts, etc. The editor makes such decisions, not the writer. All letters which should be italicized, such as titles of books, should be underlined, not printed in italics.

Third, if you are responsible for the camera ready copy, for example, for ERIC or desktop publishing, then you can use different type faces and sizes of fonts, italics, bolds, etc., to make your manuscript easier to understand. Sometimes, however, the manuscript becomes more elaborate and more difficult to read. It is always most important for readers to understand.

Fourth, it is important to make it sure that your manuscript does not have any problems. You should ask someone to read and make sure that your explanations are clear, etc.

Fifth, it is important that your manuscript is error free. You should proofread it at least twice, and have someone else proofread it, if possible. If you are not a native English-speaker, it is better to have it checked by native speakers of English. There should not be any grammatical or spelling errors. When your manuscript is used as a camera-ready copy, you have to be particularly careful.

5. Conclusion

Since you have spent much time and energy for your postgraduate research, you have a lot of useful knowledge and information which you might consider sharing with people who have similar interests. If you spend a little more time on your class assignments or MA dissertation, you can publish them and share them with other people. We are interested in what you are doing, and we hope that you will consider publishing your work.